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Atari Online News, Etc.  
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->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"  
"\*\*\*\*\*"

Well, it "cooled" off a little today; and we're currently getting some much-needed rain. My lawn looks like a low-cut hay field, with a few patches of green to remind me that a lush lawn was once there! And with a partial water ban, I don't always get a good opportunity to water the lawn. Hard to imagine with all of the rain (floods) that we got around here in the early spring!

And, atypical for New England, we had a lot of severe weather here this past week. As I'm sure that Joe will likely mention in his column this week, there were quite a few tornadoes touching down all over the place! Connecticut (Joe's home state) had four tornadoes and Maine had three. Massachusetts, where I am, had tornado warnings, but no tornadoes ever touched down. Quite a scary time, not knowing what is going to happen with these "storms" in your area! I can't imagine what those folks living in that part of the country known as "Tornado Alley" must go through every year at this time!

I know I promised (again!) to proffer some words of wisdom this week! But, in addition from being exhausted from a busy week between the two jobs, I have been affected with a lot of uncomfortable aches and pains this week. Some tests I recently had are hinting at some arthritis in my foot, but I'm not sure that's the problem. The pain is too localized, in my view. So, I'll probably inquire some more and perhaps see a specialist or two to seek some beneficial recourse. It's been tough to stay "immobile" at my desk for any length of time - not that moving around is much better! So, I want to get this week's issue finished as quickly as possible, and then try to work out some of the kinks as best as I can. I know you'll forgive me for another week of excuses!

Until next time...

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING  
compiled by Joe Mirando  
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Another week has come and gone, and there really isn't a hell of a lot to talk about in the Atari world. Big surprise, right? Well, Atari hasn't produced a computer in many many moons, and even us diehards are slowing down. Of course, as our computers get older, so do we.

It's been an interesting week here. Well, actually it's been a fairly boring week with high temperatures and humidity and one 'interesting' day.

That one day, we had some really energetic thunderstorms. Now, we're not Texas or Oklahoma or Kansas. We're Connecticut. We don't tend to have the conditions conducive to tornadoes all that often. We're more likely to have steambath conditions than whirlwind conditions. So when the Emergency Alert System kicked in that day on every television and radio in three counties, we all kind of took notice.

Yep, a real, honest to goodness tornado warning in three counties (eventually four).

I looked outside. Bright and sunny out there. And no breeze at all. No shaking telephone poles, no tree branches heaving to and fro, no green-skinned women on brooms or bicycles. And only the usual number of flying monkeys. [grin]

I wasn't too worried about it, since I've seen them issue tornado watches before and never seen any indication of a tornado to go along with it.

Out of curiosity, I turned the television on and tuned to a local station. There it was in technicolor; a big old cone superimposed on a map of the state. Quite an angry looking mess it was, and the edge of the cone stopped just short of my position on the map.

Then, when they updated the map, it was right on top of me. Then a lightbulb blew and it got a little dim in the living room. I went to see which lamp it was, and to my surprise, they were both out. They had been out all along, this being afternoon on a bright and sunny day.

Then I realized what it was. The sky outside. What a nasty looking sky! Dark shadows of purple and green. Yeah, that "no breeze at all" thing? The proverbial calm before the storm. The branches on the trees were now whipping back and forth, and there was a moderate rain falling.

I looked at the television again, that cone right on top of my town now, and then back at the sky.

"Okay puppies," I said to the dogs, "let's go downstairs". They looked at me and cocked their heads to one side, unsure, as usual, of what I was saying.

Now, I've had one of the dogs for about three and a half years. The other for just over a year. Neither of them have ever been down in the cellar. They've been taught that they just don't go down there. So when I grabbed one of them and carried her down the stairs as the other one followed, they were quite confused. But, being dogs, they saw it as an adventure.

Back upstairs to fill a couple of gallon jugs with water... just in case... packing up stuff I thought might come in handy: and a sleeve of crackers and a box of cookies and granola bars, flashlights, the dogs' water bowls and, of course, my laptop. It took two trips to bring everything I wanted to have down into the basement, and the dogs were deep

into 'explore' mode now. It took a few minutes to get things squared away; water jugs and edibles on a ledge, out of the dogs' reach, plugging in the laptop and making sure I was getting a WiFi signal, etc., all the while the dogs sniffing around and routing through half-open storage boxes.

Oh, phones! I forgot phones! I ran back upstairs and grabbed the cordless phone, knowing it would be useless if the power went out, and picked my cell phone up off the counter and pocketed it. I looked outside. Nasty! A Dark and almost 'wounded' looking sky, wind tossing things about all over, and rain. Thick, heavy drops, slapping on the ground, slapping against the side of the house, the windows and doors. Quite a noisy rain. The kind of sound that says, "Boy, git yer butt outta here.. now."

I listened to it and went back downstairs to the now anxious dogs. The laptop was connected to both house current and WiFi. I fired up weather dot com and hoped for the best.

Hail! The sound of ice pellets slapping against the house in the wind. What I could see from the basement windows was dark, shadowed and foreboding. Not at all a good sign.

The weather web page was showing the storm directly over me. No actual tornadoes in my area, but the strong possibility of them. The storm was projected to pass in another 20 minutes. Time enough for things to change from bad to good or from bad to worse.

Strong winds. Very strong. Worrisome. I updated the weather page. The storm was still centered right over me. The wind was picking up and getting louder. The dogs didn't like that a bit.

The lights went out. Luckily, the laptop had a little bit of battery life. I tried to update the weather page. It was taking forever.

Duh. The laptop could run on batteries, but the DSL modem and WiFi router could not. I had no connectivity. Damn, the things you take for granted.

So I sat there with a flashlight and the dogs, the laptop with its lcd panel glowing, waiting for an update page that wasn't going to come.

Darn. Why hadn't I thought of a radio? Oh, because I no longer had one. That's right. The only radio I had was part of the stereo system. And, of course, that requires electricity.

Nothing to do but sit there and wait. So that's what I did. I used my cell phone to call someone I knew would check the weather site for me. Good. The storm was passing. It was leaving the area. 2 minutes 'till the National Weather Service bulletin expired. Oddly, the electricity came back on. I still don't understand how or why, but it did. I took the chance and went upstairs, leaving the dogs in the cellar. It was still windy, still raining, but it looked to be brightening. When things calmed down sufficiently, I stuck my head outside to quickly survey for damage.

Wow! Nothing! Not so much as a fallen branch. I brought the dogs back upstairs, along with the supplies I'd brought down and the laptop.

Time for phone calls. Friends and relatives in the area. "I'm okay. How about you?"

The results were mixed and ran almost the full spectrum from 'no damage' to broken windows and fallen trees, one of them damaging a house. I was



Kinect's camera-based system lets players control games with body and hand gestures and is seen as a means to spark sales momentum into the Xbox platform before the holiday season. The hopes are that it will lure new and casual players to the Xbox and steal customers from the rival Nintendo Wii and Sony PlayStation 3.

It remains to be seen if cost-conscious consumers and game fans, many of whom have already bought one or more of the consoles, will warm to spending hundreds more on hardware, and Kinect-specific software costing about \$50.

Several analysts expect Microsoft to initially sell some 3 million Kinect units, despite what is considered a steep price. Wedbush Securities analyst Michael Pachter says the company has room to cut prices or build attractive bundles, but doubts the sales of the market-leading Wii will wilt.

"I don't see a meaningful threat to the Wii at these prices," he said. "The all-in cost of the arcade bundle is \$299, still \$100 above the Wii, although some people will find that attractive. At this price, it's not particularly competitive with the Wii."

For industry analyst Michael Gartenberg, the price of Kinect is somewhat higher than he had anticipated, but he said the inclusion of a game should ease initial sticker shock, making the system an appealing holiday season option.

"Given the costs of the competition for similar features, I think Kinect will be able to hold its own in terms of pricing, especially against Sony," said Gartenberg of Altimeter Group.

Sony will launch "Move," its motion-controlled feature for the PlayStation 3 gaming system, on September 15, hoping to get the jump on Microsoft's Kinect. Like the Nintendo Wii, Move's motion system is based on a wireless remote control.

Pachter noted that the all-in cost of the PS3 plus a complete Move package is \$479: \$399 for the PS3, a game, Move and Eye camera, plus another \$80 for an extra Move and a sub-controller.

While Kinect was a hit at E3, it relies solely on voice, body and hand gestures - and no buttons - which some critics say may make precision game controls difficult.

Microsoft said on Tuesday that it would also sell for about \$300 a Kinect unit bundled with a version of the Xbox 360 that has 4 gigabytes of internal memory. The current standard Xbox model comes with 250 gigabytes and is priced at \$300.

### Superheroes Forge New Career Path in Video Games

Superheroes are enjoying a new career path, heading straight from the pages of comic books into video games and no longer having to stop at Hollywood to collect their credentials first.

For every movie blockbuster like Marvel Entertainment's "Thor" and

Universal Pictures' "Scott Pilgrim vs. the World," there's a video game counterpart but in many cases comic book games are now launching without any Hollywood tie-ins.

"Not everyone reads comics, although most people know the major superheroes, but the majority of people play video games," said Jim Lee, co-publisher of DC Comics and executive creative director for Sony Online Entertainment's "DC Universe Online" game.

"Games are a portal for us to bring new people into the world of comic books," he said on the sidelines of Comic-Con International, the world's largest comic book and popular arts convention taking place in San Diego this week.

"DC Universe Online," an upcoming massively-multiplayer online (MMO) game, will allow fans to create their own superhero and interact with characters like Superman, Batman and Wonder Woman in environments like Metropolis and Gotham City.

Lee said DC Comics will unveil a "DC Universe Online" bi-weekly print comic book that will launch before the new game this fall and tie into the video game's backstory.

"We're going to look for opportunities where maybe we take individual player-created characters from the game and bring them into the comic book and give gamers a thrill by becoming an official part of the DC Universe," said Lee.

Younger gamers will be able to put on Iron Man's suit, steer Silver Surfer's famous board or don the red, white and blue shield of Captain America in Gazillion Entertainment's MMO game, "Marvel Super Hero Squad Online."

Based on the animated TV series, the game allows friends to unite online and take control of pint-sized versions of classic characters like Spider-Man, Iron Man and Hulk in Super Hero City and Villainville.

Gazillion is also developing a more grown-up MMO game, "Marvel Universe," which is a few years out.

Comic book creator Stan Lee, who dreamed up many of Marvel's iconic characters, is lending his voice to Activision's new "Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions" game.

Sony Pictures is rebooting the "Spider-Man" film franchise for 2012 but from this September gamers can take part in an all-new adventure featuring multiple versions of the web slinger.

"You have four different versions of 'Spider-Man' in one game and I don't know what could be more appealing to fans than that," said Lee, who provides the voice of the narrator in the game.

Another Lee creation, "Thor," is getting the video game treatment from Sega which will be released in tandem with the Paramount Pictures movie next summer.

Marvel superheroes like Thor, Iron Man, Captain America, Spider-Man, and Wolverine are expected to appear in Capcom's new fighting game, "Marvel vs. Capcom 3," next spring.

"At Capcom we're good at making fighting games and Marvel is good with creating characters and telling stories, so it's been a great collaboration," said Ryoto Niitsuma, producer of "Marvel vs. Capcom 3."

Marvel Comic writer Rick Remender is one of a growing number of comic book writers who have worked on original video games like Electronic Arts' "Dead Space." His latest effort, Epic Games' shooter "Bulletstorm," blends traditional comic book-style tongue-in-cheek action and violence.

"I hope that these new comic book games encourage more people to get their hands on comics and explore these worlds," said Remender.

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A-ONE's Headline News  
The Latest in Computer Technology News  
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

### New Rootkit Threatens All Versions of Windows

Microsoft has confirmed a new, highly dangerous zero-day vulnerability that has caused multiple researchers to issuing warnings. The exploit is a whopper on all levels.

It comes into the enterprise via hidden files on USB sticks or via shared network files. It requires no user interaction to infect the system (simply viewing the icon is enough to trigger it). It propagates itself. It loads as a rootkit infection. It affects all Windows operating systems, even full-patched Windows 7 systems. It seems to target extremely sensitive information - researchers say it seems to have been made for espionage. If all that weren't scary enough, a researcher has already published proof-of-concept code.

Anti-malware vendors are updating their software to add detection of the threat. Microsoft is among them. According to the Microsoft Malware Protection blog [1]: "We have multiple signatures that detect this threat for customers using Microsoft Security Essentials, Microsoft Forefront Client Security, Windows Live OneCare, the Forefront Threat Management Gateway, and the Windows Live Safety Platform. "

### McAfee Announces Internet Security, Family Protection for Mac

While malware threats for the Mac may still be limited, there are plenty of other nasties to watch out for online. That's why McAfee has released a pair of its popular protection products for the Mac: McAfee Internet Security and McAfee Family Protection. These products allow Mac users to surf the Web safely.

If you re just looking to keep your own surfing habits from getting you



into trouble, McAfee Internet Security can protect you from dangerous Web sites and browser exploits as well as telling you if a particular online shopping site has been checked over by McAfee (unfortunately, McAfee's Site Advisor, which adds safety markings right inside your browser is only compatible with Firefox at the present time). It can also scan e-mail and IM attachments from Mail and iChat to make sure nobody tries to slip you a mickey while online, and can repair many files without damaging the contents.

In addition, a dedicated Secure Search tool allows you to make sure that phishing sites don't find their way into your results; a two-way firewall keeps an eye on all the traffic entering or leaving your computer as well as locking down outside access to protect from hackers; and all the while McAfee Internet Security can scan for both Windows and Mac malware.

McAfee Internet Security runs \$80 and covers one Mac for one year; after that, you'll need to buy a new copy as there's currently no upgrade pricing available.

That's all well and good for your own personal Web surfing, but if you're more concerned about what your kids might be getting up to, there's McAfee Family Protection (also available for the iPhone and iPod touch. Not only does it allow parents to filter searches by keyword and prevent access to Websites from 35 different categories of content, but reports provide parents an overview of all the Websites that their kids are visiting.

Alerts can be sent to parents via e-mail or text message if a child tries to access a site that's not appropriate for them. In addition, parents can specify time limits to manage their kids' Internet use and block the use of specific programs on the Mac. Parents can also remotely modify a child's profile if necessary.

McAfee Family Protection covers up to three Macs for a year for \$40. As with Internet Security, you'll need to shell out for a new copy after that due to any lack of upgrade pricing at present.

Both products available now and require Mac OS X 10.5 or later. They also come with a 30-day money-back guarantee and 30 days of free support.

#### VeriSign 'Trusted' Service Now Scans Sites for Malware

VeriSign said Monday that it has begun to add a "VeriSign Trust Seal" logo to search results and on Web sites, that can be used to verify that a site does not harbor malware.

VeriSign already places a logo on some sites that tells the user that it has secured the site via an SSL certificate. The "VeriSign Trusted" logo now also means that the site is checked on a daily basis to see if an attacker was able to penetrate its security and inject malware that would then be downloaded by the site's customers.

A related "Seal-in-Search" technology will place a VeriSign logo next to search results, including Google, alerting users that VeriSign has certified the site as safe to visit, where malware is concerned.

"In the face of increasingly elaborate attacks and fraud schemes, web sites need solutions that do more than data encryption," said Tim

Callan, vice president of product marketing at VeriSign. "By enhancing our SSL Certificate services with new features that instill trust at every step of the online experience - at no additional charge to our customers - we're delivering a more robust and value-driven solution. In the process, we're redefining what web sites should expect from online security."

If malware is found on the customer's site, VeriSign turns off the Trust Seal for the site, preventing it from being loaded and displayed. The site then can go to VeriSign's site, where the malware code is identified, and remove it. About 24 hours after the code is removed, the site will be re-scanned. If the malware is truly gone, VeriSign will re-enable the "Trusted" logo, VeriSign said.

#### Wireless Broadband Network Set To Launch Next Year

U.S. consumers and businesses may get more options in wireless service starting next year, with the launch of a new wireless broadband network that aims to provide competition to the incumbent phone companies.

Private-equity firm Harbinger Capital Partners on Tuesday revealed details of the launch of its wireless network, LightSquared, which should cover 92 percent of the population by 2015.

But there are financial and regulatory hurdles to overcome. And in another wrinkle, LightSquared won't initially be offering conventional cell phone service, just data. It's possible to send phone calls over data connections, but that technology is not fully mature or standardized.

Still, LightSquared represents a rare new entrant in the wireless market. Only two other companies, Verizon Wireless and AT&T Inc., have firm plans to build nationwide networks using the same, fourth-generation network technology that LightSquared will use. Sprint Nextel Corp., through its Clearwire Corp. subsidiary, is building a third one with a different 4G technology that's likely to get less support from equipment makers.

Consumers won't buy service directly from LightSquared. Instead, it will sell access wholesale to other companies that can resell it to consumers. LightSquared hopes to attract cable TV providers, phone companies that don't have wireless networks of their own and retailers that want to provide wireless service under their own brand.

Dan Hays, who focuses on telecommunications with consulting firm PRTM, said LightSquared "could provide a renewed opportunity for retailers and major brands such as Wal-Mart, Best Buy, and Office Depot to enter the wireless market as service providers to consumers."

LightSquared plans to start providing service in the second half of 2011 in Las Vegas, Phoenix, Denver and Baltimore.

LightSquared said Nokia Siemens Networks will build, maintain and operate the network under a \$7 billion, eight-year contract. Nokia Siemens is a joint venture of Finland's Nokia Corp. and Siemens AG of Germany.

The contract is an important step for Nokia Siemens, which hasn't had much of a presence in the U.S. market for wireless equipment. On Monday, it announced a deal to buy Motorola Inc.'s networks business for \$1.2 billion,

with a view to increasing its foothold in the U.S.

One reason it's rare for new national wireless carriers to spring up is that it's difficult and expensive to procure the rights to airwaves across the nation. Verizon Wireless paid \$9.4 billion for nationwide spectrum rights in a 2008 auction, for example.

LightSquared is in an unusual position in that it owns nationwide wireless spectrum once set aside for satellite phone use. Harbinger bought SkyTerra, a satellite company, earlier this year.

Placing calls over satellites is expensive and impractical compared with using cell towers, so the FCC allows spectrum holders to back up satellite coverage with towers. That gives LightSquared a "back door" to building out a conventional ground-based network of cell towers.

However, under current FCC rules, all devices that use LightSquared's spectrum have to come with the ability to connect to a satellite besides conventional cell towers, according to satellite industry consultant Tim Farrar. That would add to the cost of devices and limit the selection.

LightSquared is banking on the FCC changing its rules to allow devices that only talk to towers. Regardless, it needs to launch a satellite later this year to satisfy the FCC's condition that it be able to provide satellite connectivity.

The launch of the new network would fit into the FCC's goals of creating more competition in the wireless market. FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski said Tuesday that he was pleased to learn of the creation of LightSquared.

Farrar said it's also not clear if Harbinger will be able to raise the billions needed to build out the network, and other expenses.

"It's going to be very interesting to see where this money comes from," Farrar said.

Tom Surface, a spokesman for LightSquared, said the company "will evaluate our funding needs as we develop and grow our business."

LightSquared's CEO is Sanjiv Ahuja, who was CEO of French cell phone company Orange from 2004 through 2007. He then founded a company that started wireless service in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

#### NY Man's Facebook Ownership Claim Lands in Court

Facebook will try to get a New York man's claim for majority ownership of the website thrown out of court, attorneys for the social networking site said Tuesday.

A complaint by Paul Ceglia of Wellsville claims that a 7-year-old contract he signed with Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg for software development entitles him to 84 percent of the company.

"No one's ever said it's not his signature or it's a fake contract," Ceglia attorney Terrence Connors said during a federal court hearing in Buffalo.

Connors said the two men met when Zuckerberg, then a Harvard University freshman, responded to an ad Ceglia had posted on Craigslist looking for someone to develop software for a street-mapping database he was creating.

Zuckerberg offered to take on Ceglia's project for \$1,000, Connors said, and then told Ceglia about a project of his own, a kind of online yearbook for Harvard students that he wanted to expand.

Ceglia said he gave Zuckerberg another \$1,000 to continue work on Zuckerberg's "The Face Book," with the condition that Ceglia would own a 50 percent interest in the software and business if it expanded. The percentage grew to 84 percent based on a clause that added a percentage point for each day the project went past its Jan. 1, 2004, due date.

Zuckerberg's undertaking "at that time was a fledgling project," Connors said. "Who knew it would turn into what it has turned into today."

Facebook recently celebrated its 500 millionth user, Connors said.

At the center of Ceglia's claim is a two-page "work for hire" contract bearing the names of both men.

Facebook attorney Lisa Simpson acknowledged on Tuesday that Zuckerberg and Ceglia had worked together on the street-mapping website but said the contract submitted by Ceglia was full of "inconsistencies, undefined terms and things that don't make sense."

"We have serious questions about the authenticity of this contract," Simpson told U.S. District Judge Richard Arcara. "What the contract asserts is there is a relationship about Facebook and there isn't one."

Ceglia's complaint was filed in state Supreme Court in Allegany County on June 30 and transferred to federal court at Facebook's request. A state judge's temporary order restraining Facebook from transferring assets was frozen by the federal judge last week. Both sides agreed Tuesday to let it expire July 23.

The attorneys also agreed to come up with a filing schedule for the case by Aug. 6, after Ceglia's attorneys indicated they may file a newer version of their complaint and Facebook attorneys said they planned to file a motion to dismiss it altogether.

Ceglia was the subject of a temporary restraining order issued by New York Attorney General Andrew Cuomo in December 2009, after Cuomo said a wood-pellet fuel company operated by Ceglia and his wife took more than \$200,000 from consumers and failed to deliver the pellets or refunds.

The case is pending.

A telephone listing for Allegany Pellets was not in service Tuesday.

In 2008, Palo Alto, Calif.-based Facebook settled a lawsuit over its origins brought by three of Zuckerberg's former Harvard classmates, who claimed he turned their idea into Facebook after they hired him to work on a website that later became ConnectU.

The Obama administration on Friday proposed trying to enhance access for people with disabilities to websites for hotels, retail stores and other public sites as well as improve access to movie theaters.

Most of the proposals are aimed primarily at improved access for the deaf and the blind.

With the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act on Monday, the Justice Department issued four proposals for public comment aimed at finding ways to keep up with advancing technologies so people with disabilities are not left behind.

"Just as these quantum leaps can help all of us, they can also set us back -- if regulations are not updated or compliance codes become too confusing to implement," Attorney General Eric Holder said in a statement.

However, the proposals could draw criticism from the business community, which already has a rocky relationship with the Obama administration over issues including new regulations on the financial industry.

One key proposal focused on improving access for people with disabilities to websites of state and local governments as well as those sites of private businesses like restaurants, hotels and other commercial outlets.

Noting that the Internet has evolved substantially since the 1990 law went into effect, the department asked for comment on what resources are available to help those with disabilities access existing websites as well as what the costs would be for making them accessible.

"We're generally supportive of the Americans with Disabilities Act but we need to come up with a reasonable way to provide these services," said Randy Johnson, a senior vice president for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and worked on the 1990 law while a congressional staff member.

"It's a matter of concern, but we're going to work with them on it," he said.

The Justice Department noted that the federal government has encouraged self regulation of the Internet, but said that in this case there was a potential need to intervene to improve access for those with disabilities.

"It is clear that the system of voluntary compliance has proved inadequate in providing website accessibility to individuals with disabilities," the proposal said.

The Justice Department set a six-month comment period and said it planned to hold a public hearing on the subject.

The department said it was also considering requiring movie theaters to show movies with closed captions and video descriptions at least 50 percent of the time and sought comments on the benefits and potential costs.

That could have a big impact on national chains like Regal Entertainment Group and AMC Entertainment, because the Justice Department said those technologies are not generally made available in theaters.

The department also proposed improving furniture and equipment like ATM

cash machines and communications with 911 emergency call centers.

## Facebook as Popular as Filing Taxes - What?

Here's a head-scratcher for you: a recent survey conducted by the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) determined that Facebook scores alongside airlines, cable companies and - wait for it - filing taxes online - in terms of customer satisfaction. That means the Web's most popular site, with half a billion users, is also the scourge of our existence. What?

Let's take a look at the ACSI's data and see why Americans apparently hate spending 7 hours per month on Facebook.

So Facebook scored in the bottom 5 percent of all private sector companies - the same range as the IRS tax e-filing system, airlines and cable companies. How did other sites do? The scale is 0 to 100, with 0 being the worst and 100 being the best.

Twitter was not included this year because most users access the micro-blogging site via third-party apps. It's also worth mentioning that though it is not a social media site, Netflix scored 87 points - proof that Netflix is, in fact, awesomesauce.

I'm having a hard time believing that Facebook is just one point above MySpace. We're talking MySpace, the world's forgotten social networking site.

Looks like Americans enjoy automobiles (a tanking industry, breweries (duh), and pet food more than social media. Yet we spend \* so much time \* clicking through status updates and watching cat videos.

Does this mean that people are logging into Facebook, fists clenched and shaking with anger? What are we so angry about?

Larry Freed, president and CEO of ForeSee Results, which partnered with ACSI on the e-business survey, sheds some light on the most common complaints. "Our research shows that privacy concerns, frequent changes to the Web site, and commercialization and advertising adversely affect the consumer experience," Freed said.

Makes sense. Facebook did have a hell of a year with privacy complaints, so much so that it had to hold a privacy summit, much like Steve Jobs had to personally break up the Antennagate fiasco. Plus users have never been a fan of the aesthetic changes.

As far as advertising goes, well, that's how you run a business. TechCrunch also notes that "information posted by a user's 'friends' about Mafia Wars or Farmville" frustrated users. Don't you know you can hide that stuff from your feed?

Facebook took this public whipping in stride with a statement given to TechCrunch: "We haven't reviewed the survey methodology in detail, but clearly we have room to improve. Building a simple, useful service is the best way to earn and sustain the trust people put in us. That's why we spend so much of our time and energy focused on improving the products we offer and introducing new ones," a Facebook representative said.

Facebook's failures might mean good news for its competitors, who gained some cred after Facebook's privacy disaster. The biggest winner may be Google, who is reportedly working on building its own social networking site called Google Me.

"Some will definitely see these ratings as an opportunity to come up with something better that could unseat Facebook. But this wouldn't be an easy task. It's would take a lot of effort and a serious sum of money, plus some inspired marketing too," Dan Olds, an analyst for The Gabriel Consulting Group, told Computerworld.

Manpower? Marketing? Money? Yeah, that sounds like Google, which is worth almost \$150 billion.

If Google can crank up the heat on Google Me in a big way, it stands a chance not to beat Facebook (I doubt anything could /beat /Facebook), but it could become a major thorn in Facebook's side.

The American Customer Satisfaction Index is a national indicator of customer satisfaction with products and services. About 70,000 people are surveyed every year to measure their satisfaction with 225 companies in 45 industries. The Index was founded at the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business.

#### Businesses Failing at Social Networking, Study Says

Companies are doing a poor job of using social networks, such as Facebook and Twitter, to engage their customers and employees. In fact, 70 percent of consumers want to interact with businesses via social media, but only 30 percent of companies are equipped to handle it. The grim news comes from a study by research firm Yankee Group, commissioned by Siemens Enterprise Communications.

Most customers and employees would rather use social media for business communications, but one-third of enterprises either lack formal social networking policies, don't allow their employees to use social networks at work, or are unaware of their company's participation in social media, the study showed.

By failing at integrating social networks, including corporate blogs, into regular business communications, enterprises are missing a golden opportunity to engage their customers and enhance worker productivity.

"Social media is changing the way businesses, customers and employees interact, and this creates significant opportunities for contact centers and the enterprise as a whole to leverage the integration of these tools into business processes," said Yankee group research Zeus Kerravala, in a statement.

Other study findings show the importance of a strong social media presence for business:

- \* Fifty percent of survey respondents use social networks daily, or several times a day.

- \* Social media boosts devotion: Almost 60 percent of customers say that

business outreach via social networks would improve their loyalty to a company.

- \* Enterprises should monitor social networks for consumer feedback, customers say.

- \* Employees love social media. Nearly 70 percent of workers want better tools to manage social networks for business. Example: They want the ability to launch a Web conference and invite people from their social and work networks.

The Siemens news release for the study included a pitch for its OpenScape software tools, which help enterprises unify their communications services with social networks. The self-serving nature of the announcement ("Your social media strategy stinks, so buy our software") might lead some to question the veracity of the study's conclusions.

However, the Yankee Group's findings corroborate earlier studies that essentially say the same thing: Most businesses are too disconnected from social media for their own good.

A poor or nonexistent social media presence gives customers and employees the impression that your business is out of touch or disinterested in open communication - a strategy that could drive business elsewhere in the long run.

#### Playboy Unveils 'Safe-for-Work' Website, TheSmokingJacket

Playboy founder Hugh Hefner launched a new website on Tuesday stripped of his trademark nude playmates in a bid to make it "safe for work."

TheSmokingJacket.com is named after the leisure apparel favored by the 84-year-old Hefner around the celebrated Playboy Mansion.

Playboy Enterprises, publisher of the iconic men's magazine and the new website, said the site is intended to be a "men's entertainment destination that provides guys with smart and sexy distractions throughout the day."

"The smoking jacket isn't just something I like to wear around the mansion," Hefner said in a brief video introducing the site.

"It's Playboy's new safe-for-work website," he said. "Next to the mansion it's the best hangout on the planet."

TheSmokingJacket.com does not feature any nudity but there is no scarcity of bikini-clad women including pictures from Playboy's vast archives.

"Cube dwellers and office drones alike shall rejoice at this fun, sexy, satirical antidote to the drudgery of the work day," Playboy's editorial director Jimmy Jellinek said in a statement.

The site features video clips and articles in several categories - Girls, Entertainment, Sex, Videos and Lifestyle - and is designed to appeal to a younger audience.

For nudity, Web surfers can always go to Playboy.com, which attracts more



than six million unique visitors a month, according to Playboy Enterprises.

Hefner, who launched Playboy in 1953, recently announced plans to buy all of the outstanding shares in the company to take it private. Penthouse owner FriendFinder Networks has announced an unsolicited rival bid for the company.

Playboy, known for its curvaceous centerfolds and bunny logo, went public on November 3, 1971 and enjoyed decades of success.

It has been struggling in the digital age, however, and was threatened with delisting from the stock exchange last year.

### India Unveils Prototype of \$35 Tablet Computer

It looks like an iPad, only it's 1/14th the cost: India has unveiled the prototype of a \$35 basic touchscreen tablet aimed at students, which it hopes to bring into production by 2011.

If the government can find a manufacturer, the Linux operating system-based computer would be the latest in a string of "world's cheapest" innovations to hit the market out of India, which is home to the 100,000 rupee (\$2,127) compact Nano car, the 749 rupees (\$16) water purifier and the \$2,000 open-heart surgery.

The tablet can be used for functions like word processing, web browsing and video-conferencing. It has a solar power option too - important for India's energy-starved hinterlands - though that add-on costs extra.

"This is our answer to MIT's \$100 computer," human resource development minister Kapil Sibal told the Economic Times when he unveiled the device Thursday.

In 2005, Nicholas Negroponte - cofounder of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Media Lab - unveiled a prototype of a \$100 laptop for children in the developing world. India rejected that as too expensive and embarked on a multiyear effort to develop a cheaper option of its own.

Negroponte's laptop ended up costing about \$200, but in May his nonprofit association, One Laptop Per Child, said it plans to launch a basic tablet computer for \$99.

Sibal turned to students and professors at India's elite technical universities to develop the \$35 tablet after receiving a "lukewarm" response from private sector players. He hopes to get the cost down to \$10 eventually.

Mamta Varma, a ministry spokeswoman, said falling hardware costs and intelligent design make the price tag plausible. The tablet doesn't have a hard disk, but instead uses a memory card, much like a mobile phone. The tablet design cuts hardware costs, and the use of open-source software also adds to savings, she said.

Varma said several global manufacturers, including at least one from Taiwan, have shown interest in making the low-cost device, but no manufacturing or distribution deals have been finalized. She declined to name any of the companies.

India plans to subsidize the cost of the tablet for its students, bringing the purchase price down to around \$20.

The project is part of an ambitious education technology initiative, which also aims to bring broadband connectivity to India's 25,000 colleges and 504 universities and make study materials available online.

So far nearly 8,500 colleges have been connected and nearly 500 web and video-based courses have been uploaded on YouTube and other portals, the Ministry said.

### Facebook Membership Hits 500 Million Mark

The number of people using Facebook hit the 500 million mark on Wednesday, meaning one in every 14 people on the planet has now signed up to the online social-networking service.

"As of this morning, 500 million people all around the world are actively using Facebook to stay connected with their friends and the people around them," Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg said in a blog post.

"This is an important milestone for all of you who have helped spread Facebook around the world."

To celebrate, the California firm introduced an application that lets members of the online community "tell the incredible stories of the moving and interesting ways they've used Facebook."

Examples given by Zuckerberg included NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen jogging with Facebook fans during his term as Danish prime minister and a US woman using the service to battle breast cancer.

"Our mission at Facebook is to help make the world more open and connected," Zuckerberg said.

"I could have never imagined all of the ways people would use Facebook when we were getting started 6 years ago."

Zuckerberg has pointed to Facebook's unrelenting growth to rebuff criticism of feature changes or privacy safeguards at the website.

Americans are increasingly obsessed with Facebook and many young women check their page even before using the bathroom in the morning, according to a poll released last week.

However, a US study released on Tuesday indicates that while people may be addicted to Facebook they rank it near the bottom when it comes to customer satisfaction.

Facebook landed with notoriously despised airlines and cable television companies in the bottom 5 percent of private companies ranked in a 2010 American Customer Satisfaction Index E-Business Report produced in partnership with ForeSee Results.

"Our research shows that privacy concerns, frequent changes to the website, and commercialization and advertising adversely affect the

consumer experience," ForeSee chief executive Larry Freed said in a release.

Zuckerberg openly advocates Internet firms releasing innovations quickly and "iterating" with improvements.

"It's clear that while innovation is critical, sometimes consumers prefer evolution to revolution," Freed said.

Facebook recently overhauled privacy controls in the face of a barrage of criticism that it is betraying the trust which has made it the world's biggest social network.

Facebook is growing despite criticisms because "there really isn't a strong alternative and Facebook is relatively sticky, migrating off is a ton of work," said analyst Rob Enderle of Enderle Group in Silicon Valley.

Leaving Facebook ostensibly involves finding a new online home for photos and other digital content from profile pages and then convincing friends to join one there.

"People keep joining Facebook because that is where their friends are," Enderle said.

"Until there is a strong alternative, we won't even have the beginnings for change. And the more people that join Facebook, the stronger that competitor is going to have to be."

Technology titans Google and Microsoft have the resources and the motivation to field or back a Facebook rival, according to the analyst.

Microsoft bought a small stake in Facebook three years ago for 240 million dollars (US).

Microsoft added Facebook to Outlook last week, giving users of its popular email program the ability to view status updates, pictures and wall posts from their friends on the social network.

### Meet the Floppy Drive With Legs

We all know that floppy drives are pretty much dead technology at this point, but that didn't stop design duo Chambers Judd from devising this clever concept. Floppy Legs is a concept-design external floppy drive with legs that extend when it comes in contact with water.

The idea behind Floppy Legs is to design a product with self-preservation in mind. Chambers Judd describes Floppy Legs as "part of the Attenborough Design Group, a fictional organisation charged with investigating the use of behaviours found in nature to defend products from threats in their everyday environment."

Whether or not we'll actually ever see such a product remains to be seen - most "ruggedized" gear is designed to take whatever life dishes out (flamethrowers included, not to get out of the way - it's an interesting concept nonetheless. Though I can't help but wonder, if such gadgets were to become self-aware, would they run away from abusive gadget owners?

Just a thought.

## MacPaint Source Code Archived Online

If you were a Mac user in the 1980s, chances are you knew - and loved - Apple's MacPaint drawing program, developed by Bill Atkinson. The application, which paved the way for programs like Photoshop by developing key tools like the paint bucket and lasso, has long been remembered fondly by developers and users alike - and on Tuesday, its source code was formally inaugurated into the Computer History Museum's online collection.

Bloomberg Businessweek has the full story of the program's journey from discarded diskette to museum piece. After declaring MacPaint "the best program ever written" at an event celebrating the Macintosh's 20th anniversary, Stanford University computer science professor Don Knuth asked those in attendance if they knew how he might get his hands on the original source code, to study it as research for an upcoming book.

In the audience that night was former Macintosh developer Andy Hertzfeld (who has become somewhat of a historian and author on the early Apple years). Out of curiosity, he called up Atkinson to see if he still had a copy of the code lying around.

Atkinson did indeed have a copy, though restoring it proved to be initially challenging, as the floppy disks had been formatted for a developmental OS version of Apple's Lisa computer. After finding a suitable machine to get "the bits out of the box," Atkinson and Hertzfeld then had to deal with the difficult task of convincing Apple, who still owned the software, to release the source code to the public for historical research.

Though Apple initially seemed amenable to such an idea, a series of unfortunate roadblocks prevented anything from happening until January of 2010, when Hertzfeld met with Steve Jobs personally to discuss the request. With Apple's CEO on the case, the request was pushed through almost immediately, and as of Tuesday the code is now freely available on the Web through the Computer History Museum.

Additionally, Apple has provided the museum with the source code to QuickDraw, a component of the OS that provided for the creation of bit-mapped graphics for MacPaint and other programs. According to Hertzfeld, this source code alone (which amounts to 17,101 lines spread out over 36 files) made up about one-third the code of the entire original Macintosh operating system.

The Computer History Museum, in addition to hosting the source code for both MacPaint and QuickDraw, has provided a short history (with screenshots) of the programs, along with several anecdotes about the software. Creator Bill Atkinson describes the compiling of MacPaint as an "art form, like any other art form," and repeatedly emphasizes the beauty of clean, simple code.

To read more about MacPaint's history or to download the source code, you can visit the Computer History Museum's Website. Andy Hertzfeld, who now runs Folklore.org, has several additional stories about the program, plus a gallery of MacPaint art made by former Macintosh UI designer Susan Kare.

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